The Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad Honorarium Lectures, 1955-56

TREATMENT OF LANDSCAPE IN EASTERN AND WESTERN POETRY

THE MAHARAJA SAYAJIRAO UNIVERSITY OF BARODA.
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Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar

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By

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OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF ARCHAEOLOGY
2 FEB 1970
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THE MAHARAJA SAYAJIRAO UNIVERSITY OF BARODA
सत्यं शिवं सुन्दरम्

Price Rs. 2-4-0

First edition
Copies 500
1956

Publisher :
G. H. Bhatt, M.A.
Director,
ORIENTAL INSTITUTE,
BARODA.

801.951
RAM

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Printed by Shri Ramanlal J. Patel, at the M. S. University of Baroda Press (Sadhana Press), Raopura, Baroda. September 1956.

PREFACE

The Baroda State Government had initiated a scheme called "The Sayajirao Gaekwad Honorarium Lecture Series" under which an eminent scholar in any one or more of the following subjects was invited every year to deliver a series of lectures at Baroda and he was paid an honorarium of Rs. 5,000/-.

1. Poetry
2. Literature
3. History
4. Philosophy
5. Economics
6. Scientific Research
7. Fine Arts
8. Social Service and Social Reform

On the merger of the Baroda State with the Bombay State, the Government of Bombay under Education Department G. R. No. 9107 dated the 28th March, 1950 entrusted the management of these lectures to the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda and sanctioned a special recurring grant of Rs. 5,000/- for the purpose. The grant is now amalgamated with the annual block grant to the University.

Some of the eminent scholars who have delivered lectures under this series are Dr. Radhakumud Mukerjee, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, Shri C. V. Vaidya, Shri K. Natrajan, Dewan Bahadur K. H. Dhruva, Pandit V. N. Bhatkhande, Dr. S. Dasgupta, Dr. Sir Shafaat Ahmed Khan, Dr. (Mrs.) Sarojini Naidu, Dr. R. K. Das, Dr. T. E. Gregory, Sir C. V. Raman, Rao Bahadur K. V. Rangaswami Iyengar, Dr. Birbal Sahni, Dr. Sir J. C. Ghosh, Professor K. T. Shah, Dr. K. S. Krishnan, Dr. D. N. Wadia and Dr. R. C. Majumdar.

The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda invited Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Vice-Chancellor, Banaras Hindu University, Banaras, to deliver lectures during the year 1955-56 and he was kind enough to accept the invitation. He delivered three lectures on "Treatment of landscape in Eastern and Western Poetry" in the Central Hall of the Faculty of Arts at 6-0 p.m. from the 6th to the 8th February, 1956.

The lectures were highly appreciated by the audience. It is hoped that they will be equally appreciated by the students as well as scholars of the subject.

The Maharaja Sayajirao
University of Baroda
18th September, 1956.

Sd/- B. K. Zutshi,
Registrar.

Treatment of Landscape in Eastern and Western Poetry

Office of the
Director of Archaeology
Madras

TREATMENT OF LANDSCAPE IN EASTERN AND WESTERN POETRY

The object that has been kept in view by me is not merely to illustrate the varieties of treatment by different poets of scenery and landscape but also to outline the psychology and philosophy, that underlie such treatment. European literature furnishes the greatest amount of material though the contributions of Sanskrit and Tamil, the two Indian languages with which I am familiar, are equally significant.

Before, however, proceeding to discuss the poetry of landscape, it is not irrelevant to emphasise the importance of the poet as the fullest and most effective embodiment, throughout the ages, of national and racial genius and aspirations.

The term 'Kavi' (the Sanskrit synonym for a poet) also denotes a sage or an omniscient being. Śukra, the preceptor of the Asuras, and Vālmīki, the author of the Rāmāyaṇa, are described as Kavis *par excellence* and the place assigned to the poet-seer in the earliest of the Vedas indicates the value attached to verbal harmony or the "word" as one of the fundamentals of the universe. "In the beginning was the Word". Both music and poetry are treated as aspects of Śabda Brahma, the Supreme Entity typified as sound, one of the names of Śiva being Nādatanu (one who is embodied in sound or vibration).

In one of the Hymns of the Ṛgveda Agni, the spirit of fire, is invoked as a poet (vide Ṛgveda, X. 91-3):

सुदक्षो दक्षैः क्रतुनासि सुक्रतुः
अग्ने कविः काव्येनासि विश्ववित्।

"Most skilful with thy powers, most wise with wisdom, Agni, the poet, through his poesy, comprehends the world."

The poet with poetic power according to another seer has fixed his divine shape in the sky. Ṛgveda X. 124-7.

कविः कवित्वा दिवि रूपमासजत्

In a celebrated hymn which emphasises the pervasive unity of Brahman pictured as the golden bird, the Ṛgveda, X. 114-5 asserts:

सुपर्णं विप्राः कवयो वचोभिः
एकं सन्तं बहुधा कल्पयन्ति

"Wise poets, in their words, describe the one Existence in many ways." Again, in another passage, Ṛgveda III, 33-38, two rivers are supposed to be addressing the poet and they adjure him:

एतद्वचो जरितर्मापि मृष्ठा
आयत्ते घोषान् उत्तरा युगानि

"Forget not, singer! this word of thine Which later Yugas (æons) will remember".

As a climax, in Ṛgveda II. 23.1, the Vedic Seer exclaims:

गणानां त्वा गणपतिं हवामहे
कविं कवीनाम् उपमश्रवस्तमम्

"We call on thee, Lord of Hosts, The Poet of Poets, most famous of all, The supreme king of spiritual knowledge, O Lord of spiritual Wisdom."

Later, to Vālmīki came the gift of poesy unbidden and unforeseen when his mind and soul were filled with pity at the sight of a fowler killing one of two mating birds. He expressed himself in language which originated the śloka metre and his words were acclaimed as the manifestation of the Goddess of Speech:

मा निषाद प्रतिष्ठां त्वमगमः शाश्वतीः समाः ।
यत्क्रौञ्चमिथुनादेकमवधीः काममोहितम् ॥
श्लोक एव त्वया बद्धो नात्र कार्या विचारणा ।
मच्छन्दादेव ते ब्रह्मन् प्रवृत्तेयं सरस्वती ॥

As explained in the opening verses of the Rāmāyaṇa, Vālmīki composed the Epic under the stimulus of the above inspiration and at the suggestion of the great Nārada himself.

It may, indeed, be asserted that throughout the East, the poet, the musician and the sage were invariably identified with each other and the position of the poet was that of the spokesman of the deepest thoughts, secular and sacred. Likewise, in old English and Gelic, the word for poet was "maker" (maker) and the Runes of the Scandinavian poet-magicians were the aptest representations of the Norse genius. Although in the more recent history of West the same primacy was not attached to the vocation of the poet, yet it has been wisely asserted that the ballads or songs of a nation make as well as record history. The part played by the Troubadours and Trouvères of the Middle Ages and the formative influence exercised by patriotic verses and ballads need only be mentioned to realise that at crucial moments of history, the struggles, the failures and the triumphs of national effort, and especially the efforts directed towards the liberation of peoples, were not only accompanied by but often originated in the stirring music of national poets. The electrical effect produced during the French Revolution by the Marseillaise and the contributions of Wordsworth, Byron and Shelley to the liberation of Hellas as well as Homer's successful appeals to the Greek spirit may be instanced as well as the indebtedness to poets of the Italian and Spanish Revolutions. The rousing prose-poems of Whitman also furnish an example of a decisive influence during national crises. Similarly, the Bandemataram song and Tagore's lyrics initiated and

accompanied national upheavals in India. The claims made by Arthur O'Shanghnessy are neither unfounded nor exaggerated:

We are the music-makers
And we are the dreamers of dreams
Wandering by lone sea-breakers
And sitting by desolate streams;
World-losers and world-forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams,
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems.
With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an Empire's glory;
One man with a dream, at pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a Crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample a kingdom down.

Poetry is produced in various environments and under the influence of many emotions; but all poetry, and nature poetry in particular, must follow Bacon's wise rule, that we cannot command Nature except by obeying it, *i.e.*, that the artist must have Nature as a model and a master. We may listen to what Wordsworth observes:

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
He too is no mean preacher;
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.

The thoughts and feelings aroused by bird-song mount far beyond the song itself and involve implications of kinship with some aspects of Nature's harmony. When William Watson refers in "Nature's Way" to

Nature! whose lapidary seas
Labour a pebble without cease

he draws a comparison between the work of a patient and loving artist and the unceasing and perfecting action of the waves upon a pebble. Likewise in his "Address to the Actors," Shakespeare's Hamlet, exhorts them to "hold, as it were, the mirror up to Nature" and he similarly urges that the truest teacher of a poet or painter is Nature itself. Pope in his epigrammatic manner pronounces:

"All Nature is but Art unknown to thee."

It must be remembered that to make Nature one's teacher is not to be a slavish copyist. Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his "Discourse to the Students of the Royal Academy", uttered the profound truth : "A mere copier of Nature can never produce anything great". And in the spirit of wilful paradox which was the special gift of Oscar Wilde, he expresses the same sentiment in an inverted kind of way : "Nature is always trying to copy Turner", meaning thereby that certain artists force the pace and endeavour to out-do Nature. Pope stigmatises such efforts in his Essays on Criticism :

"Poets, like painters thus unskilled to trace
The naked Nature and the living grace,
With gold and jewels cover every part
And hide with ornaments their want of Art."

So far, I have been dealing with the poet who is describing natural scenery in accordance with or sometimes in contrast to his mood. Such a treatment is the result of a complex or, shall we say, a sophisticated, civilisation. The case is otherwise with the Fathers of Poetry in most countries. When in one of the greatest of dramatic creations "Prometheus", the Greek dramatist, Aeschylus, speaks of the "multitudinous laughter" of the waves of the ocean, he, no doubt, compares the ripples of a tideless sea like the Mediterranean with the laughter of men and women in unison. The description is joyously objective. Early poetry in Greece, Rome, England and France was, in the main, characterised by the accurate recording of the facts and phenomena of Nature without any express or implied comments relating them to the moods of man. So does Homer pronounce in his Iliad :

As the generation of leaves, so is that of men.

The Greek genius was extrovert and frankly objective with a few exceptional cases like Sappho's and therefore the natural descriptions are not as intimately related to human moods and fortunes as in later English poesy or in the Indian epics and classical verse. This Greek characteristic is noticeable, for instance, in the Odyssey where Ulysses lands from his raft near the twin bushes of olive and describes his surroundings in detail. Similar is a description of the sea :

"There appeared the sky and sea only ....
dark cloud above, the hollow ship and
beneath it, the deep darkened."

We note here knowledge of the general appearance of the sea as well as minute observation of phenomena and colour. This is the case also in much of Roman poetry. When Horace, in a mood of gentle melancholy, wishesto return to his favourite spot in the country, his description is simple, though picturesque.

"O Fons Bandusiae splendidior vitro",
"O Spring of Bandusiae, more brilliant than glass".

Virgil, whether he is describing the rivers hurrying to the ocean or refers to the facile descent to Avernus or pictures an orchard with a little maid gathering apples, is direct and untouched by introspective meditations.

> "While the rivers shall run to ocean, while the shadows shall move in the mountain valleys, while the sky shall feed the stars, always shall they honour, and thy name, and thy glory abide".
>
> "Facile is the descent to Avernus! Night and day the portals of gloomy Dis. stand wide; but to recall the step and issue to the upper air—there is the toll and there the task".

The one great exception is, of course, furnished by Lucretius. His verses are distinguished alike by marmoreal structure and reflective cynicism. Let us see the picture of the after-effects of a storm.

Suave, mari magno turbantibus acquora ventis,
E terra, magnum alterius spectare laborem;
Non quia vexari quemquamst incunda voluptas,
Sed quibus ipse malis careas quia cerners suave est.
Suave etiam belli certamina magna tueri
Per campos instructa tua sine parte pericli.
Sed nil dulcius est, bene quam munita tenere
Edita doctrina sapientum templa serena,
Despicere unde queas alios passimque vitae,
Certare ingenio, contendere nobilitate,
Noctes atique dies niti praestante labore
Ad summas emergere opes retrumque potiri.

"Sweet it is, when on the great sea the winds are buffeting the waters, to gaze from the land on anothor's great struggles; not because it is pleasure or joy that any one should be distressed, but because it is sweet to perceive from what misfortune you yourself are free. Sweet is it too, to behold great contests of war in full array over the plains, when you have no part in the danger. But nothing is more gladdening than to dwell in the calm high places, firmly embattled on the heights by the teaching of the wise, when you can look down on others, and see them wandering hither and thither, going astray as they seek the way of life, in strife matching their wits or rival claims of birth, struggling night and day by surpassing effort to rise up to the height of power and gain possession of the world."

Goethe, who, at least in his earlier poetry, was essentially Greek in his psychological make-up, is able to reproduce in his " Wilhelm Meisters " the poetic approach of the Greeks :

‘ Kennst due das Land, wo die Zitronen blüin ?
Im dunkeln Laub die Gold-Orangen glühn,
Ein Sanfter Wind vom blauen Hinmel weht,
Die Myrte still und hoch der Lorbeer steht—
Kennst du es wohl ?
Dahin' Dahin'
Mocht ich mit dir, o mein Gelibter, ziehn'

‘ Know you the land where the lemon-trees bloom ?
In the dark foliage the gold oranges glow ; a soft
wind hovers from the sky, the myrtle is still and
the laurel stands tall—do you know it well ?
There, there, I would go, O my beloved, with thee'
Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre III. i.

The descriptions in his Faust especially in the second part are quite different in outlook and nature is viewed and pictured as an embodiment of the simple joys of the heroine or of the sophisticated and dark cynicism of Mephistopheles.

What, in truth, is the difference between poetry and a piece of information ? A poem signifies beyond a definite set of thoughts and images, a flash of reality to which poetic intuition points. Keepingin view these observations on the intrinsic character of poetry or Art in general, let us turn to landscape and let us begin with Milton's " Allegro " from which I cite a passage :

Straight mine eye has caught new pleasures
Whilst the landscape round it measures
Russet lawns and fallows gray
Where nibbling flocks do stray
Mountains on whose barren breast
The labouring clouds do often rest
Meadows trim with daisies pied
Shallow brooks and rivers wide.

His main preoccupation is with our feelings of affection for Nature and the power of Nature over us and we perceive landscapes as a reflection of the moods of the light-hearted rustic. In the art of recapturing the features of a landscape, whether it be a mountain or a high placc or the lake-shore or the rivers and brooks, Wordsworth has been one of the most successful and comprehensive of poets. Despite Carlyle's sneer against prose or verse describing landscape, there is no gainsaying that the external world around us, whether it

is beautiful and charming, terrible or oppressive, monotonous or varied, is of profound interest to us and it influences us whether we are aware or unaware of such influence. What Carlyle meant to say was that most descriptions of landscape were affected but he was so temperamental and saturnine and gloomily critical and so caught up by the vicissitudes of human history that he was almost deliberately unfair to the lyric muse. It is not too much to say that not only in poetry but in narrative, in familiar letters from friends or even in History, one feels disappointed if the surrounding aspects of Nature and the scenes and sights compassing us are not evoked. Indeed, it has often been remarked that Caesar's history of the Gallic wars is too deliberately devoted to his own achievements and that we hardly get a picture of what he saw around him either in Gaul or in Britain. It may be true that military or historical writers have no leisure to describe the dawn or the twilight and it is also true that it is possible to over-do a description and to force the pace. In a remarkable work on Landscape, P. G. Hamilton has, however, referred to two or three passages from writers who, though writing in prose, have really enriched the poetry of landscape. One of the cited passages is from Dicken's "American Notes" describing the various and picturesque forms of the stumps of trees. From Charles Kingsley one special passage has been quoted, occurring in his description of High Woods:

"Dark glossy leaves toss off sheets of silver light as they flicker in the breeze."

Another is from the writing of a statesman and administrator Sir Charles Dilke, who, however, becomes a prose-poet when, describing the plains of Colorado:

> "Now great roaring uplands of enormous sweep
> Now boundless grassy plains.
> There is all the grandeur of monotony
> And yet continual change.
> Sparkling atmosphere and never-failing
> Breeze, the air is bracing even when
> Most hot, the sky is cloudless and no rain falls.
> The roll of the prairie is as grand as the Atlantic."

Ruskin like Sir Thomas Browne and Victor Hugo can attain lofty poetic heights although writing in prose. In passage after passage, he lifts us from observed facts to the realm of imagination. His description of Sion and its mountain gloom and sketches like his "Picture of the Episcopal Palace" a half-deserted barrack-like building overlooking its neglected vineyard in the Maramma and unnumbered descriptions in 'Modern Painters" and in the "Seven Lamps of Architecture" demonstrate what can be done to associate varying scenes with human moods, emotions and ideals. Writers like these make us not only see the country but feel its atmosphere.

The art of investing a landscape with life in poetic language requires concentrated and imaginative conception and musical expression; but more than those are needed, namely, knowledge at first hand and close and loving observation. A passage like the following from Wordsworth's "Prelude"—describing the misty Atlantic under a full moon is an almost perfect illustration of the qualities stated above.

The Moon hung naked in a firmament
Of azure without a cloud and at my feet
Rested a silent sea of hoary mist
A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved
All over still ocean; and beyond
Far, far beyond, the solid vapour stretched
To headlands, tongues and promontory shapes
Into the main Atlantic that appeared.

The same kind of phenomena was described by Tennyson as a full sea glazed with muffled moonlight.

Such descriptions are all the more compelling in their appeal if they are signalised by brevity and concentrated force. For instance,

Great black clouds
Drag inward from the deep
Shake the songs, the whispers and the shrieks
Of the wild wood together.

In contrast to the limpidity of Wordsworth and Tennyson is Shelley's mystic allusiveness; but with it there is true vision as in his "Revolt of Islam."

Till down that mighty stream, dark, calm and flat
Between a chasm of cedarn mountain's riven
Chased by the thronging winds whose viewless feet
As swift as twinkling beams had under Heaven
From woods and waves wild sounds and odours driven.

Of a similar character is a passage from Rosetti's King's Tragedy.

The cloud stooped low
And the surf rose high
And where there was a line of the sky
Wild wings loomed dark between.

Tediousness or false or exaggerated sentiments can be noticed even in the greatest of poets, including Wordsworth. Nevertheless, among English writers, he is *par excellence* the artist who is not only always conscious of his environment but is profoundly influenced by it in every mood. It may be remarked

that Wordsworth was a contemporary of painters who were remarkably proficient in delineating landscape. In the English language, Wordsworth, and in their special ways Shelley, Keats and Coleridge and not far behind them, Tennyson, are the greatest portrayers of landscape and Wordsworth is perhaps the greatest of them all. A story is told by Crabble Robinson, a friend of Wordsworth who visited him and finding him absent, asked the maid to let him see the poet's library. He asked her where Wordsworth worked. The maid is reported to have replied: " This is master's library but he studies in the fields." This story demonstrates the source and the strength of his inspiration. Some examples of his variegated achievements may be cited. The feeling of solemn silence amidst multitudinous noises cannot be better expressed than in these lines:

> Loud in the vale—this inland Depth
> In peace is roaring like the sea.
> Yon star on the mountain-top
> Is listening quietly.

The comparison between the discontented mind and the agitation of a mountain brook contained in the Excursion is a unique specimen of the assimilation of natural scenes to a poet's moods:

> Dread life of conflict ! which I oft compared
> To the agitation of a brook that runs buried nor lost
> Down a rocky mountain
> In silent pools, now in strong eddies chained
> But never to be charmed to gentleness.

The reference to light airs just sufficient to disturb but not to efface: the reflection is found in a description of Peel Castle :

> So pure the sky, so quiet was the air
> So like, so very like, was day to day
> Wherever I looked thy image still was there
> It trembled but it never passed away.

Edmund Spenser and most Elizabethan and Jacobean lyricists are in the main chroniclers and are not meditative analysts.

> The merry cuckoo, messenger of Spring
> His trumpet shrill hath thrice already sounded.

So far I have furnished illustrative extracts to demonstrate the broad lines of classification of landscape poetry, one resolved upon perceiving and describing Nature and landscape in detail without pausing to connect the details with human emotions, the other using Nature as a background or as reacting on or illustrative of the moods of men. Both methods of approach depend in

several degrees on what has been styled "Creative intuition" the analogue in literature to the Bergson's "Elan Vital". At this stage, it may be useful to advert to the major difference between the Art of the East and that of the West, especially with reference to this faculty of creative intuition.

In the Chinese language, the word for landscape is composed of two ideographic symbols, one for a mountain and the other for water respectively, the basic idea being that the charm and appeal of landscape arise from the presence of these two features. Wordsworth says in relation to Switzerland:

"Two voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains; each a mighty Voice,
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty."

It will be perceived that these lines express not only what the Chinese symbols seek to convey but in Wordsworth's own characteristic manner, they equate the passion for liberty with life lived by the side of the sea or hills, thus exemplifying an aspect of landscape poetry with which I shall deal more fully later. Similarly, Byron in his "Childe Harold" soliloquises:

"There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar,
I love not man the less, but Nature more."

Here too, we see the impact on the poetic temperament of the manifestations of Nature, Byron's misanthropic and embittered mood being in sympathy with the tumultuous roar of the breakers. Elsewhere he insists:

"Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean—roll
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore."
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow;
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

Byron constantly refers to man's transitory and futile achievements in contrast with the timelessness of the ocean.

Of a very different type was Walter Savage Landor, an authentic poet, who wrote little but chiselled his verses. Trained in classical lore, he was not swayed by passionate and momentary impulses like Byron but was poised in his outlook. He says of himself with cultured resignation:

Nature I loved, and next to Nature, Art;

I warmed both hands before the fire of life;
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

The equanimity of his nature interprets the moods of the sea but in quite another fashion than that of Byron. In his play, "Gebir," he refers to "sinuous shells of pearly hue."

Apply
Its polished lips to your attentive ear,
And it remembers its august abodes
And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there.

In another context, speaking of a girl's troubles he says:

From you, Ianthe, little troubles pass
Like little ripples down a sunny river.

Again, addressing the Sun, he says with mellow wisdom:

Thou breathing dial! since thy day began
The present hour was ever mark'd with shade.

Analytical and sombre and full of bitter anger against the evils of society and seeking the simple life that Nature yields but realising the oft-witnessed cruelty of man to man, George Crabbe expresses in "The Village," his indignation which was to have historic results in the shape of agricultural reform in England:

Lo! where the heath, withering brake grown o'er
Lends the light turf that warms the neighbouring poor;
From there a length of burning sand appears,
Where the thin harvest waves its wither'd ears.

I have selected some typical specimens which may serve to illustrate the differing aspects that strike a poet according to his mood or situation.

When dealing with any branch of literature or of the Arts it would seem to be preferable to approach it rather in the spirit of philosophers like Croce and Henri Bergson than in the attitude of the modern pragmatists or existentialists. I am making these observations in view to recent discussions as also the recent practice of several writers and artists in Europe and America. After all, it must be remembered that the aim of a lyrical poem, especially when it deals with landscape, and when it uses words like sun-shine, twilight clouds, mountains or the seas, is not to inform us of specific physical or meteorological facts but to express certain feelings in us. What has often been called the Wordsworthian attitude to Nature and what has been reiterated with reference to the admitted English taste for landscape painting, keep in view this particular aspect. I have deliberately made a reference to Bergson because he postulates in his concept of the objective as well as of the subjective world an energising principle which

he names the Elan Vital and which, in his view, makes more intelligible the creative Evolution regarded by him as the ground or substratum of existence. The landscape painter and the landscape poet are likewise the exponents of the Elan Vital which is perceived by them in the phenomena of the Universe and which brings them into close relation with the human mind and the emotion.

Generally speaking, the method of approach of the Western artist has been that of an individualist. The approach of the Oriental artist, singing in Persian, Sanskrit or Tamil, of the Indian sculptor and of the Chinese or the Japanese painter is that of forgetting his ego and mirroring an idea. The Eastern artist proceeds to such an extent that, we are not made aware even of the authorship of, say, the Ajanta Frescoes, or the Ellora or the Mahabalipuram rock sculptures or of some of the greatest hymns or poems of the past. The first duty of the Oriental artist seems to be to forget himself. And so forgetting himself, he often resorts to a process of mental purification by concentrating on some mental image by means of evocatory verses termed Dhyana ślokas or other methods of inward search whereby the work of Art sought to be created is visualised or brooded upon. Not only the visible appearance of objects but the inner mystery of their life is the object of his quest. This is the real secret of what is called the symbolism of Eastern Art, and for this reason, Oriental Art eschews realism as understood in the West. As a Japanese painter, Okakura Kazuko, remarked, "self-forgetfulness is the prime virtue of an artist," and you may see this exemplified alike in Tagore and the great folk-poems and rhapsodies of North and South India. In the language of Jacquets Maritain, the human figure or a natural object is regarded by the Eastern artist or poet only as a part of cosmic appearance or, as expressed by Coomaraswamy, it is one of the shadows cast by the dance of Śiva.

Chinese carving and ceramics and more especially Chinese landscape painting follow, more or less, the same rules; and as a Chinese artist expresses the idea, "it is not captured by, but captures things." In a sense, Chinese landscape painting is more true to detail and more vivid than Indian Art, and thus nearer to Western Art than to Indian. This is largely because Chinese art, which is open to the impact of Confucius and Lao Tse and only in a lesser degree of the Buddha, has not experienced the same immersion in the philosophy of Maya and Karma that the Indian artist has. It has been said that in the mind of a Western painter the picture is conceived as seen in a frame or through a window and as presented in that manner to the spectator, whereas to the Indian, the image exists in the mind and is projected from the mind and reflected on to space. Coomaraswamy observes: "Western presentation is designed as if seen from a fixed point of view and must therefore be optically plausible. Indian and Chinese landscapes are represented as seen from more than one

point of view." Maritain in his Creative Intuition avers that not plausibility but intelligibility is the essential of Eastern Art. The distinction is between what is painting to the eye and the painting of the idea. In Chinese literary master-pieces like the "Red Chamber Dream" or in Indian poetry, things appeal differently to the Eastern artists than to their European counterpart. The use of multiform unpolished and unshaped rocks as ornaments in Chinese palaces and gardens is an instance in point and what has been termed "featheriness of birds," the "furriness of animals" the intricacies of insects and the rhythms of boughs and leaves, present themselves differently to the Chinese, Indian, and the Western masters.

The artist in the East regards it consciously or unconsciously as his mission to experience a communion with the mystery of the Universe. By a curious evolution, the latest developments of Sur Realism in poetry and Art in the Western world with their insistence on liberation from reason, or rather on the great influence of the irrational in man, bring modern Art into psychological contact with Eastern creations. Not aesthetic concerns so much as the functionings of thought, are sought to be reproduced by artists like Van Gogh, Matisse and Rouault.

Whether in landscape poetry or in landscape painting, Nature may be looked at as a separate Entity to be copied or imitated in its external appearance. In the alternative, the artist may look at Nature as a mystery which he tries to follow in its secret workings and inner ways or operation by means of intuition. One of the greatest of recent painters, Van Gogh expresses this idea thus: "Instead of trying to reproduce exactly what I have before my eyes, I use colour more arbitrarily so as to express myself more forcibly". What Van Gogh said about colours may also be stated of words. He continues: "I want to paint men and women with something of the eternal which the halo used to symbolise and which we seek to give by the radiance of our colour". That supreme lyrical poet Shelley was also a profound critic and in his "Defence of Poetry" he declares: "Poetry defeats the curse which binds us to be subjected to the accident of surrounding impressions. It creates anew the Universe after it has been assimilated in our minds. The beauty of a bunch of flowers or a landscape is not the same as the beauty of a mathematical demonstration. Beauty belongs, in fact, to the realm of transcendentals." Another profound though often eccentric critic, the American Poe, asserts of the poetic principle that it is the instinct for beauty which makes us consider the world and its pageants as a glimpse of the correspondence with Heaven.

This discussion brings us to a consideration of what Western critics failed to discern, until recently in the Indian Epics and the Puranas and in our classical descriptive poetry. They shrank from the so-called extravagance of Eastern

imagery and they derided the many-armed and many-headed personages, and they spoke of the absurd impossibility of Seas of milk or honey and ridiculed natural descriptions divorced from stark reality. Shelley and Poe give the answer to such critics. To such an extent has the reaction proceeded against the 19th Century way of estimating Art and so little is mere mechanical and photographic accuracy prized by recent artists that a poet like Charles Baudelaire goes to the extent of insisting that any totally perfect performance in poetry or painting detracts from its beauty: "Longing and irritating melancholy is inseparable from the earth and is essential to beauty here below." In another place he utters the paradox: "A lack is lacking in any totally perfect performance. What is wanted is a sacred weakness, that kind of imperfection —through which infinity wounds the finite." The contrast between certain types of sculpture of abstract or perfectly modelled beauty as in Greek Statuary and the generality of modern paintings cannot be better expressed. So far as poetry is concerned, in its lyrical or descriptive aspects, it has and must have no object; and in this respect, it transcends other forms of Art. And so, in India, the search of the poet was not for beauty for its own sake excepting in so far as it broke its way through self-imposed discipline. On the contrary, European Art has generally sought beauty conscientiously until a reaction arose in recent years and manifested itself in verses like those of Rumbaud, Lawrence and Brooke which concentrated on the ugly or sordid and were composed in deliberately obscene language or with willfully startling imagery.

All the above remarks, taken together, may be summed up as involving the insistence that in Indian and Eastern Art generally, intuition is the main characteristic, not imitation in the sense of a copy of natural appearances. The Greek philosopher, Aristotle, uttered the same truth: "The beauty is the greater as artist conveys a greater amount of intuitive knowledge."

One of the greatest of Western painters argues in favour of instruction by Nature rather than imitation of Nature. Poetry is and should be spiritual communion with the essence of being. He adds: "Don't confuse the phantoms of reason with phantoms of imagination."

The close and intuitive observation of natural detail clothing it in lovely imagery is as old as the Vedas. In one of the Hymns of the Ṛgveda occurs this passage:

प्राग्रुवो नभन्वोऽ न वक्वा ध्वस्रा अपिन्वद् युवतीर् ऋतज्ञाः।
धन्वान्यज्राँ अपृणक् तृषाणाँ अधोगिन्द्रः स्तर्यो३ दंसुपत्नीः॥

ऋ. ४।१९।७

Indra led the unwedded young girls, skilled in Rita,
as fountains, bubbling, flow streaming forward.

He flooded with water the desert and thirsty plains,
and milked the dry cows who had a mighty master.

It is remarkable, not only for the comparison of the passage of young and joyous girls with bubbling fountains but as incidentally proving that girls were highly educated in those days as they are described as

(women skilled in Rita or Dharma)

It would be true to assert that a keen observation of nature's mood and phenomena has been our heritage from the earliest times.

Universal eulogism has been lavished on the magnificent description of the Dawn (Ushas) in the Rigveda and one need only cite two hymns.

तुभ्यमुषासः शुचयः परावति
भद्रा वस्त्रा तन्वते दंसु रश्मिषु
चित्रा नव्येषु रश्मिषु।
तुभ्यं धेनुः सबर्दुघा विश्वा वसूनि दोहते।
अजनयो मरुतो वक्षणाभ्यो दिव आ वक्षणाभ्यः॥ ऋ. १।१३४।४

For Thee the radiant Dawns in the far off sky spread out their lovely garments in wondrous beams,
For Thee the nectar-yielding cow yields all treasures as milk;
The Maruts Thou hast engendered from the wombs, the heaven's wombs.

The spirit of the Forest is thus addressed

आञ्जनगन्धिं सुरभिं बह्वन्नामकृषीवलाम्।
प्राहं मृगाणां मातरमरण्यानिमशंसिषम्॥ ऋ. १०।१४६।६

I have praised the Queen of the Forest, Mother of wild life,
Redolent of balm, sweet-scented, possessing much food, but lacking tilled land.

Very striking is the hymn describing the dissimilarity of Day and Night and asserting that though one is hidden and one is manifest, yet both Day and Night are one pathway parted in two:

नाना चक्राते यम्या३ वपूंषि तयोरन्यद् रोचते कृष्णमन्यत्।
श्यावी च यदरुषी च स्वसारौ महद् देवानामसुरत्वमेकम्॥
ऋ. ३।५५।११

पदेइव निहिते दस्मे अन्तस् तयोरन्यद् गुह्यमाविरन्यत्।
सध्रीचीना पथ्या३ सा विषूची महद् देवानामसुरत्वमेकम्॥
ऋ. ३।५५।१५

Different each from the other, you Two have made yourselves twin beauties;
One of the Twain is bright, the other dark.
And yet, these Two, the white and the red, are sisters.
Great is the single divinity of the Gods.

The Two are, as it were, treasured in a wondrous place;
Of the Twain one is hidden, the other manifest,
One common pathway is parted in two.
Great is the single divinity of the Gods.

Curiously, the Adikavya, Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa which is full of descriptions of cities, hermitages, mountains, rivers and seas, is unlike the work of most ancient writers, more subjective than extrovert in its treatment. But there are exceptions like the description of Chitrakūta in the Ayodhya Kanda, 56th Chapter. Approaching a sacred river covered with lilies, sri Rāma rested on the lovely Chitrakūta hill. Seeing it surrounded by deer and various other animals and other birds, he forgot the gloom of exile. Kālidāsa, in his Raghuvamsa, describing Chitrakūta says:

घारास्वनोद्गारिदरीमुखोऽसौ श्रृङ्गाग्रलग्नाम्बुदवप्रपङ्कः ।
बध्नाति मे बन्धुरगात्रि ! चक्षुर् दृप्तः ककुद्मानिव चित्रकूटः ॥

"Lady of lovely limbs; this hill of Chitrakūta attracts my eye. It appears like a proud majestic bull. The sound of the falling streams is the bull's bellowing. Its cave is the bull's wide open mouth. The cloud on the top of the hill is the mud raised up by this bull in sport and stuck to the ends of the horns.

In the description of the well-watered roads of Ayodhya in the Fifth Sarga of the Ayodhya Kanda and of the voyage to the forest in the Thirtieth Sarga, the human element and the human background are very prominent. Of course, as already stated in the description of Chitrakūta and of the Mandakini, there are many passages of picturesque depiction of hills and rivers, forests and hermitages, but, as always in the Ramayana, epigrammatic brevity is the objective of the great poet. There are, two wonderful passages, one relating to Panchavati and another dealing with the Hemanta season, and the Sixteenth Sarga of the Aranya Kanda describes the Himalayan breezes, the aspect of the trees and the rising of the cloud girdled sun.

These are among the master-pieces of literature as also the description of the Season of Śarat in the Kishkindha Kanda, where Rama looking up, perceives bright skies and the lovely Moon-rise, bringing poignantly to his mind of loss of Sita. Although the imagery is perhaps conventional, yet the felicity and the succinctness of the language mark it out as one of the high-lights of descriptive literature. The account of the Asoka Vana in the Fourteenth Sarga of the Sundara Kanda and of Lanka and its fort in the Thirty-ninth Sarga of the Yudha Kanda and especially the first sight of Lanka with its colonnades and gardens full of singing birds and the hum of bees, abounding in large trees and flowering shrubs, are superb pen pictures abounding in carefully observed details like the reference to the seven leaved flower of the Arjuna. The aerial

return voyage of Rama and Sita has been dealt with both in the Ramayana and by Kalidasa. Valmiki uses simple but aptly descriptive language, Rama describes Lanka itself and then the bridge built by him for the sake of liberating Sita. Then he proceeds to describe Kishkindha and the Rishyamukha Hill and the car flies onwards to the Godavari and the Agastya Aśrama and then to the Bharadwaja's Aśrama. But the description is extremely brief and does not draw elaborate pictures. All the same, whatever Valmiki chooses to describe, his words are limpid and his images are apt.

Kalidasa's treatment of Rama's return voyage is one of the masterpieces of descriptive writing. Rama, having created the bridge of boats between the Indian mainland and Lanka and having destroyed the Rakshasa monarch and freed Sita from captivity, flies back to Ayodhya in the celestial car and describes to Sita the passing scenes. There is one sentiment which occurs in different shapes in several poems but which is preserved in deathless verse by Kalidasa in the thirteenth canto of the Raghuvamsa

वैदेहि पश्यामलयाद्विभक्तं
मत्सेतुना फेनिलमम्बुराशिम् ।
छायापथेनेव शरत्प्रसन्न-
माकाशमाविष्कृतचारुतारं ॥

" O' Vaidehi, glance at the mass of waters (the southern ocean) divided from the end of the Malaya Range by my bridge and *flecked with foam.* How closely does it resemble the clear skies of the Sarat season full of beautiful stars and partitioned by the milky way." Those of us who have travelled by air will have noticed how, from a great height, even huge waves appear like specks of foam. The poet has not only intuited this fact but has compared the manifestation with the milky wave in the heavens, the great cluster of enormous stellar universes which, because of the very distance, appears to us like a streak of foam or fluff. By these lines, Kalidasa has not only indicated the great height at which the Vimana was travelling but has observed a similarity of two of Nature's apparently disparate phenomena. Over and over in Meghaduta, Ritusamhara and elsewhere, Kalidasa couples natural phenomena with the onlooker's moods and desires. In the Meghaduta, we obtain vignettes which are unmatched in their fidelity to Nature. I shall only cite a few verses from this perfect portrayal of the lovers' nostalgia and the artists' delight in Nature. In the second verse, the movement of clouds at the beginning of the rainy season is described as resembling the gambols and the sporting of dark hued elephants as they pass over the mountain summits.

तस्मिन्नद्रौ कतिचिदबलाविप्रयुक्तः स कामी
नीत्वा मासान्कनकवलयभ्रंशरिक्तप्रकोष्ठः ।

आषाढस्य प्रथमदिवसे मेघमाश्लिष्टसानुं
वप्रक्रीडापरिणतगजप्रेक्षणीयं ददर्श ॥२॥

The tenth verse describes the impressive periodical migration of the cranes travelling in serried rows to their northern resorts.

मन्दं मन्दं नुदति पवनश्चानुकूलो यथा त्वां
वामश्चायं नदति मधुरं चातकस्ते सगन्धः।
गर्भाधानक्षणपरिचयान्नूनमाबद्धमालाः
सेविष्यन्ते नयनसुभगं खे भवन्तं बलाकाः ॥१०॥

In the 11th verse, there is a reference to the miraculously speedy growth of mushrooms, almost overnight, in the rainy season.

कर्तुं यच्च प्रभवति महीमुच्छिलीन्ध्रामवन्ध्यां
तच्छ्रुत्वा ते श्रवणसुभगं गर्जितं मानसोत्काः।
आ कैलासाद्बिसकिसलयच्छेदपाथेयवन्तः
संपत्स्यन्ते नभसि भवतो राजहंसाः सहायाः ॥११॥

The 19th verse contains a startling comparison between the course of the river Narmada broken up by rocks and pebbles strewing its stony river bed and the painted streaks on the rugged body of an elephant.

तस्मिन् स्थित्वा वनचरवधूभुक्तकुञ्जे मुहूर्तं
तोयोत्सर्गद्रुततरगतिस्तत्परं वर्त्म तीर्णः।
रेवां द्रक्ष्यस्युपलविषमे विन्ध्यपादे विशीर्णां
भक्तिच्छेदैरिव विरचितां भूतिमङ्गे गजस्य ॥१९॥

The 14th verse adverts to the breezes which ripen the wild figs and convey the fragrance of the moistened earth over which light rain has just fallen. It also describes the delight of the elephants when they inhale that breeze

त्वन्निष्यन्दोच्छ्वसितवसुधागन्धसंपर्करम्यः
स्रोतोरन्ध्रध्वनितमधुरं दन्तिभिः पीयमानः।
नीचैर्वास्यत्युपजिगमिषोर्देवपूर्वं गिरिं ते
शीतो वातः परिणमयिता काननोदुम्बराणाम् ॥४४॥

In verse 58 the sound made by the breeze traversing groves of hollow bamboos is described.

शब्दायन्ते मधुरमनिलैः कीचकाः पूर्यमाणाः
संरक्ताभिस्त्रिपुरविजयो गीयते किंनरीभिः
निर्ह्रादी ते मुरज इव चेत्कन्दरेषु ध्वनिः स्या-
त्संगीतार्थो ननु पशुपतेस्तत्र भावी समस्तः ॥५८॥

The effect of the South bound Himalayan breeze which causes the shoots of the pine trees to open, forms the subject of four marvellous lines.

हेमाम्भोजप्रसवि सलिलं मानसस्याददानः
कुर्वन्कामं क्षणमुखपटप्रीतिमैरावणस्य ।
धुन्वन्कल्पद्रुमकिसलयान्यंशुकानि स्ववातै-
र्नानाचेष्टैर्जलद ललितैर्निर्विशेस्तं नगेन्द्रम् ॥ ६४ ॥

These are magnificent examples of the depicting of minutely observed natural phenomena of Nature. There are also in this poem, as in the Ritusamhara other stanzas in which Nature is assimilated with aspects of the beloved.

श्यामास्वंगं चकितहरिणीप्रेक्षिते दृष्टिपातं
वक्त्रच्छायां शशिनि शिखिनां बर्हभारेषु केशान् ।
उत्पश्यामि प्रतनुषु नदीवीचिषु भ्रूविलासा-
न्हन्तैकस्थं क्वचिदपि न ते चण्डि सादृश्यमस्ति ॥ १०९ ॥

There are of course certain conventional similes. The glance of the beloved is likened to the tremulous eyes of the deer, the beauty of her face to the Moon, her hair to peacock's tails and the lilt of her eye-brows to the ripples on the brook. The evocation of the similarity of Nature with the poet's vision of his beloved is a frequent device of the Eastern Poet.

There is scarcely anything in Eastern or Western poetry to surpass the picturesqneness and the melody of the verses in the First Canto of the Ritusamhara describing the buffalos in the hot season wandering in search of water, the flight of the dry leaves carried aloft by soft winds, the panting of birds perched on withered boughs, the wandering of alarmed monkeys and oxen in search of water and the progress of the forest fire starting on the outskirts and proceeding to the valleys and burning up the dry bamboos and flaring up in sparks when it touches the grass lands.

सफेनलालावृतवक्त्रसंपुटं विनिःसृतालोहितजिह्वमुन्मुखम् ।
तृषाकुलं निःसृतमद्रिगह्वरादवेक्षमाणं महिषीकुलं जलम् ॥ २१ ॥

पटुतरदवदाहोच्छुष्कसस्यप्ररोहाः परुषपवनवेगोत्क्षिप्तसंशुष्कपर्णाः ।
दिनकरपरितापक्षीणतोयाः समन्ताद्विदधति भयमुच्चैर्वीक्ष्यमाणा वनान्ताः ॥ २२ ॥

श्वसिति विहगवर्गः शीर्णपर्णद्रुमस्थः कपिकुलमुपयाति क्लान्तमद्रेर्निकुञ्जम् ।
भ्रमति गवययूथः सर्वतस्तोयमिच्छञ्शरभकुलमजिह्मं प्रोद्धरत्यम्बु कूपात् ॥ २३ ॥

विकचनवकुसुम्भस्वच्छसिन्दूरभासा प्रबलपवनवेगोद्भूतवेगेन तूर्णम् ।
तरुविटपलताग्रालिङ्गनव्याकुलेन दिशि दिशि परिदग्धा भूमयः पावकेन ॥ २४ ॥

ज्वलति पवनवृद्धः पर्वतानां दरीषु स्फुटति पटुनिनादः शुष्कवंशस्थलीषु ।
प्रसरति तृणमध्ये लब्धवृद्धिः क्षणेन ग्लपयति मृगवर्गं प्रान्तलग्नो दवाग्निः ॥ २५ ॥

Similar in wealth of detail and the aptness of language is the description of the Spring in Canto 6 in which the references to the blossoming of mango

and Asoka trees and of various creepers and flowers end with the reminiscence of the notes of the cuckoo being borne aloft by the spring breezes.

Although some of the prominent writers on Indian aesthetic are apt to neglect Ritusamhara, yet, there is hardly a poem in the whole range of literature in which the interaction of the different aspects of the yearly seasons is delineated with such lusciousness of language and wealth of portraiture.

ताम्रप्रवालस्तबकावनम्राश्चूतद्रुमाः पुष्पितचारुशाखाः ।
कुर्वन्ति कामं पवनावधूताः पर्युत्सुकं मानसमङ्गनानाम् ॥ १५॥

आ मूलतो विद्रुमरागताम्रं सपल्लवाः पुष्पचयं दधानाः ।
कुर्वन्त्यशोका हृदयं सशोकं निरीक्ष्यमाणा नवयौवनानाम् ॥ १६ ॥

मत्तद्विरेफपरिचुम्बितचारुपुष्पा मन्दानिलाकुलितनम्रमृदुप्रवालाः ।
कुर्वन्ति कामिमनसां सहसोत्सुकत्वं चूताभिरामकलिकाः समवेक्ष्यमाणाः ॥ १७॥

कान्तामुखद्युतिजुषामचिरोद्गतानां शोभां परां कुरवकद्रुममञ्जरीणाम् ।
दृष्ट्वा प्रिये सहृदयस्य भवेन्न कस्य कंदर्पबाणपतनव्यथितं हि चेतः ॥ १८ ॥
आदीप्तवह्निसदृशैर्मरुताऽवधूतैः सर्वत्र किंशुकवनैः कुसुमावनम्रैः ।
सद्यो वसन्तसमयेन समाचितेयं रक्तांशुका नववधूरिव भाति भूमिः ॥ १९ ॥

See the contrast between these lines and his own "Ode in May" when Watson describes the glory and the fulfilment of life in the month of May.

ODE IN MAY

Let me go forth and share
The overflowing sun
With one wise friend or one
Better than wise, being fair
Where the peewit wheels and dips
On heights of bracken and ling
And, Earth unto her leaflet tips
Tingles with the spring
What is so sweet and dear
As a prosperous morn in May!
The confident prime of the day
And the dauntless youth of the year
When nothing that asks for bliss
Asking aright is denied,
And half of the world a bridegroom is
And half of the world a bride.

किं किंशुकैः शुकमुखच्छविभिर्न भिन्नं किं कर्णिकारकुसुमैर्न कृतं नु दग्धम् ।
यत्कोकिलः पुनरयं मधुरैर्वचोभिर्यूनां मनः सुवदनानिहितं निहन्ति ॥ २० ॥

पुंस्कोकिलैः कलवचोभिरुपात्तहर्षैः कूजद्भिरुन्मदकलानि वचांसि भृङ्गैः ।
लज्जान्वितं सविनयं हृदयं क्षणेन पर्याकुलं कुलगृहेऽपि कृतं वधूनाम् ॥ २१ ॥
आकम्पयन्कुसुमिताः सहकारशाखा विस्तारयन्परभृतस्य वचांसि दिक्षु ।
वायुर्विवाति हृदयानि हरन्नराणां नीहारपातविगमात्सुभगो वसन्ते ॥ २२ ॥

The verse in Kumarasambhava bringing before us the snowclad Himalayas is one of the finest of poetic conceptions.

अस्त्युत्तरस्यां दिशि देवतात्मा हिमालयो नाम नगाधिराजः ।
पूर्वापरौ तोयनिधी वगाह्य स्थितः पृथिव्या इव मानदण्डः ॥ १ ॥

"Situated far in the North, the Divine Himalayas, lord of the mountains, spanning the land from the Eastern to the Western Sea, is described as measuring rod (Manadanda) of the earth." Kalidasa refers, in the Raghuvamsa, to several peaks including Kailasa, Gaurisikhara and Mandara, but Kailasa is particularly described by Kalidasa in the Meghasandesa as covered by perpetual snow and as a mirror for the celestial maidens to observe their reflected images during their aerial flight. It is likened by an arresting comparison to the sparkling laughter of the great Mountain-God, Siva.

Throughout his poems, unlike Bhavabhuti and the latest artificial poets who not often indulge in natural descriptions, Kalidasa can never resist the temptation of referring, if not directly at least incidentally, to one or other aspect of the scenery. In the Fourth Canto of the Raghuvamsa, dealing with the Indian Ocean (Mahodadhi), he described the sandy shore bordered by groups of palm-groves with their green foliage with such fidelity that the scene is vividly presented to us.

There are passages in Kalidasa describing the confluence of the Ganga with the Yamuna, first in the Sixth Canto and then in the 13th of the Raghuvamsa. In the Second Canto of the Kumarasambhavam, there are striking descriptions of waterfalls. Both the Meghasandesa and the Raghuvamsa describe the lake Manasa-sarovara and especially the summer migration of the cranes and swans to that resort. The Thirteenth Canto of the Raghuvamsa deals with water-spouts tossed up by the waves. Indeed whenever any country or scene is adverted to, Kalidasa reflects for us its main characteristics with almost photographic accuracy and also with a painter's vision.

A disparaging remark is sometimes made by western critics regarding the Indian and especially the Sanskrit classics namely that their location and their themes are conventional. That ripe scholar Dr. Keith, on the other hand, maintains, justly that Sanskrit poets have a complete command of the emotions which appeal most deeply to the human heart. They knew to the full, he adds, the nature of love in youth and marriage, the joy of union and the sorrow of separation. Dr. Keith emphasises that the Eastern poet's love of Nature is

meticulously·intimate; and, as has been observed by him "they look on life of all kinds with a kindly eye and they share in the vicissitudes of man."

Some of the most notable and continuously interesting examples of the love of Nature are to be found in the Fourth Canto of the Raghuvamsa wherein Raghu's expeditions are recounted including those against Bengal, against the kings of Kalinga, against the Pandyas of the South and past the Malaya and Sahya mountains. And throughout this warlike journey, not only the incidents but the varying aspects of the scenery are successively described. The account of his swift march against the Persians and the Yavanas and the Hunas along the passes of the Himalayas is absorbing. Kalidasa refers to the Mahendragiri in the South and pauses among the palmyra groves where toddy is produced and drunk in little vessels made of betel leaves. As in the case of Silappadikaram, so in the case of Raghuvamsa, the southern seashore full of palm, Punnaga and Maguzha trees is brought before us with loving detail. When Raghu proceeds against the Persians, the behaviour of the war horses that roll on the sandy shores of the Sindhu river and further on, the murmur of the winds among the trees are alike detailed with great picturesqueness.

Kalidasa attains the summit of his powers in the celebrated Fourth Act of Sakuntalam where, on the departure of Sakuntala from the hermitage, he adverts to the trees watered and tended by her to the call of the Cuckoo, and the voice of benediction heard from the sky giving an itinerary of her path, bordered by lakes verdant with lotus creepers and by blossoming shade trees.

पातुं न प्रथमं व्यवस्यति जलं युष्मास्वपीतेषु या
नादत्ते प्रियमण्डनापि भवतां स्नेहेन या पल्लवम् ।
आद्ये वः कुसुमप्रसूतिसमये यस्या भवत्युत्सवः
सेयं याति शकुन्तला पतिगृहं सर्वैरनुज्ञायताम् ॥९॥
रम्यान्तरः कमलिनीहरितैः सरोभिश्छायाद्रुमैर्नियमितार्कमयूखतापः ।
भूयात्कुशेशयरजोमृदुरेणुरस्याः शान्तानुकूलपवनश्च शिवश्च पन्थाः ॥११॥

Coming down to later times, the appearance on the literary scene of artificial poetry and artificial description is noticeable even in Bhavabhuti. In his Uttararama Charita, the banks of the Kalindi are described as well as the mountain cascades,

A remarkable specimen of complicated verse is contained in Sambuka's description of Panchavati.

गुञ्जत्कुञ्जकुटीरकौशिकघटाघूत्का or कारवत्कीचक-
स्तम्बाडम्बरमूकमौकुलिकुलः क्रौञ्चाभिधोयं गिरिः ।
एतस्मिन्प्रचलाकिनां प्रचलतामुद्वेजिताः कूजितै-
रुद्वेल्लन्ति पुराणरोहिणतरुस्कन्धेषु कुम्भीनसाः ॥२९॥

Sita's own description of the hermitage and the rills descending from the hills surrounding the Godavari river may be noticed by way of contrast,

यत्र द्रुमा अपि मृगा अपि बन्धवो मे यानि प्रियासहचरश्चिरमध्यवात्सम् ।
एतानि तानि बहुकन्दरनिर्झराणि गोदावरीपरिसरस्य गिरेस्तटानि ॥८॥

There is no semblance here of the smooth flowing and simply but vividly conceived stanzas of Kalidasa. But nevertheless it is obvious that Bhavabhuti writes of what he sees and notices and does not indulge in cliches.

Although Bhavabhuti is not to be compared with Kalidasa in his delicate and cultivated love of Nature, yet some of the passages in the Malatimadhava, especially in Lavangika's description of the garden and of the breeze traversing the mango grove, are superb in conception and language. The poet reaches the height of his powers in Act IX when Saudamini arriving at Padmavak takes a bird's-eye-view of the whole scene checkered with mountains, hamlets towns and forests. The poet speaks of Lavana with its series of ripples with weeds on its borders and reeds and grass growing on the banks. Suddenly, Saudamini encounters the cataracts of the Sindhu and describee its roars in the midst of sylvan mountain tracts. The description of the mountain-side and of the variegated trees and of the temple of the Lord of Bhavani at the confluence of the Madhumati and Sindhu is a marvel of accurate though ornate descriptions.

The language of Bhavabhuti is both complicated and full of elaborate compound and complex grammatical *tours de force.*

Scattered through later Sanskrit classical poetry, are pen pictures of the seasons of the Sun and the Moon and especially of the starry skies, of the various mountains, lakes, forests and desert regions, of forest-fires and rainfall, of every variety of tree and creeper and beast and bird. But in general it may be stated that after Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti and especially in such productions as Sisupala Vadha and Kadambari, though there is an elaborate treatment of some aspects of Nature, one feels, as in some varieties of recent European literature, that it is regarded as an ornament or as a conventional addition to the texture of the poem resembling a lace border or spangles added to tissue.

The ancient Literature of Dravida, the Tamil land, includes a series of notable poems and, as in the Valmiki Ramayan, so in Kambar's version of the Epic, there are many descriptive scenes analogous to those found in the Sanskrit original. The varieties of scenery in South India were classified by the Tamil Grammarians and poets into the categories of the hilly regions, the valleys and the plains, the infertile or desert regions and the seashore, and all then have been the topics of separate reference or description. One of the most notable classics or Kavyas of Tamil literature is the Silappadikaram, the story of Kovalan and Kannaki. It is one of the five Mahakavyas in Tamil and is re-

garded as a master-piece of composition replete with literary excellence of all types and also dealing with the kindred arts of music and the drama. The songs of Kovalan and Madhavi on the seaside are lyrical outbursts of pre-eminent merit. The songs of the cowherds and the hilly women in honour of Lord Subramanya (Skanda or Kumara) are lovely specimens of pastoral poetry. The descriptions of rivers like the Kaveri and the Vaigai which irrigate the southern country of cities like Mathurai and the ancient Puhar, occur throughout the poem and its sequel, the Manimekhalai. The author of this poem was Ilango whose elder brother was the Chera monarch celebrated in the poem.

Some verses in praise of the Evening may be cited to demonstrate the wealth and complexity of poetic imagination and the careful observations of Nature which are interspersed throughout the work :

> " At the time when Mother Earth, enrobed by the waters of the deep, felt afflicted, exclaiming, ' I do not see the mighty lord (the sun) who sent out his rays all over the world and ruled it with his unequalled single disk ! Nor is it known where is the (prince) Moon who illumines the wide sky with his cool rays ! And when her four faces (the four directions) turned pale, her flower-eyes moist and her whole form covered with dew like the chieftain, who occupies, with the aid of rebellious subjects, the kingdom of powerful kings during their absence, to the grief of loyal tax-paying subjects, Evening (the alien chief) made his triumphant entry into fertile old Puhar, to the grief of faithful wives left alone by their husbands, and to the delight of disloyal women enjoying the company of their secret lovers. It was then that the Kovalar sent forth from flutes the Mullai songs, the buzzing bee sucked the honey from the Mullai flowers, the soft-footed southern breeze warded off the six-footed bee (kurumbu) which had forced his way into unopened buds and wafted the fragrance into the open street, and maidens with glittering bangles lit their shining lamps."

The fertility of simile which Tamil shares with Sanskrit may also be discerned in the description of the celebration of Indra's festival in a sea-port, the description also testifying to the existence of foreign trade on a large scale :

> " The Sun appeared over the top of the Udaya Hill, removed the cover darkness by spreading its shining rays to illumine the vast earth which erstwhile looked like a melancholy maiden, with the sea of waves for her robes, the hills for breasts, the large rivers for garlands and the clouds for flowing locks of hair.
>
> The Sun shone over the open terraces, over the ware-houses near the harbours, and over the turrets with air-holes looking like the eyes

of the deer. In different places of Puhar the onlooker's attention was arrested by the sight of the abodes of Yavanas whose prosperity was never on the wane. On the harbour were to be seen sailors from distant lands, but for all appearance they lived as one community. In the streets of the city, hawkers went about with paints, bathing powders and cool pastes, flowers, incense and fragrant scents. In certain places weavers were seen dealing in fine fabrics made of silk, fur and cotton. Whole streets were full of silk, corals, sandal and myrrh besides a wealth of rare ornaments, perfect pearls, gems and gold, which were beyond reckoning."

The description of the city itself and the central high-way leading to it, may also be cited :

"They then entered into the central highway of the city rich with the wealth of seaborne goods and reached the Cheri regions on the sea-shore where the flags on high seemed to say: 'In these stretches of white sand can be seen different kinds of goods brought in ships by foreign merchants, who have left their native homes and settled here." There were burning the lamps of those who sold dyes, sandals, flowers, scents and all varieties of sweets, the lamps of dexterous goldsmiths, the lamps of those who, sitting in a row sold pittu, the black broad lamps placed on lamp-stands by the sellers of muffins, the lamps in front of the miscellaneous shops of girl vendors, the lamps of fish-mongers glimmering here and there, beacon-lights erected to guide ships on the sea-shore, lamps taken out to sea by fishermen in their boats as they went a-fishing with nets, nightlong lights set up by foreigners speaking different languages, and finally the lamps lit by the watchmen of the warehouses containing valuable merchandise."

The existence of great irrigation works on the Kāveri is adverted to in a passage in honour of that river :

"Hail to thee, Kaveri! Thou walkedst—(flowed) along, listening to the songs of the ploughmen, the resonance of the sluices, the roar of the breaking waters, and the noise of the festive crowd celebrating their freshes. All this flow of thine, along with the din of merrymaking, is expressive of the prosperity of our king, who possesses soldiers with unbridled tongues. Hail to thee, Kaveri!"

Another passage describes the sea breaking in even on the ploughed fields near swamps :

"O lord of the sea, whose waves dash as far as the paddy fields, enrobed in beautiful corals and decked with excellent ornaments made of well-

formed pearls! O, lord of the maritime tract, whose waves, smiling with their pearl-like teeth and opening their coral lips, spread over the courtyard where the fishermen's nets are (left for drying".)

The whole of the Seventh Canto is replete with descriptions of the sea-side and the life of the fisher-folk. Of special value, both from the poetic and historical point of view, is a description of the Tamil land on the approach of Spring when the south wind blows from the Agastya hill, situated in the present State of Travancore:

"The celebrated king Maran (Cupid) with his delightful friend, Spring held sway over the fertile Tamil country, bounded in the north by the Tirupati hills sacred to Vishnu, and in the south by the Kumari sea, having for its capitals high towered Madura, Urandai of great renown, awe-inspiring Vanji, Puhar with its resounding waters. This approach of (spring) was heralded by the ambassador, the South wind, hailing from the fertile Podiyil hill sacred to the revered Saint (Agastya). As if to announce the herald's message, 'Put on your garb, O ye regiments of the fish-bannered prince, befitting your respective ranks, the cuckoo, living in a grove rich in creepers, acted as the young trumpeter of Cupid's army and sounded his note."

There is an account of the route to Madurai through parched tracts assailed by the burning Sun.

"The Brahmana replied, "You have come with your lady in the season when jungle and mountain tracts have given up their natural appearance and taken the form of a desert, losing their smooth surfaces, thus causing deep distress, since King Sun, alone with his minister Spring, by reason of his fierce heat, has diminished his essential quality and lost his beneficence, like a great kingdom whose monarch has deviated from the path of right policy under the influence of an unrighteous councillor.

'If, in this long journey, you pass across rocks, hillocks (Porai) illusory places and the bunds of lakes full of water, and reach Kodumbai by the bund of a great lake, you will come to a spot which looks like the devouring trident wielded by the God whose tuft is adorned with a crescent.

"If you decide to take the route lying to the right and pass by the Kadamba tree with outspread branches, the dried Omai tree, the Vahai with its cloven stem, the withered bamboo, the equally withered Maral dark with fissures, jungles where thirsty deer roam about vainly in search of water, and the haunts of the Eiynar, you will come across the celebrated Sirumalai of the Pandyan covered on all sides with plants

of wild rice, ripe sugarcane, full-grown millets, Ragi that grows on rich soil, garlic, saffron, beautiful Kavali creepers, plantains, arecas, cocoanuts growing in bunches, mangoes and jack tree. Keep that hill on your right and reach Madura.

" If you do not take that route, but choose the route to the left, you will hear winged beetles singing she tune of Sevvali, in the low-lying fields, in glades with cool flowers, and in jungles and desert regions. Passing these you reach Tirumalkunram, that opens into a cave which removes all delusion, and leads to the miraculous three ponds, greatly praised by the gods, and called the sacred Saravanam, Bavakarani and Ittasiddi, ever renowned."

Such excerpts proved that to an extent unequalled in European poetry until Thomas Gray wrote his " Elegy on a Country Church-yard " and Wordsworth and his contemporaries later on commenced to study Nature with loving minuteness, the Tamil poet was able to combine an accurate study of natural phenomena with precise poetic expression and a wealth of apt simile and metaphor.

Taking a conspectus of English Nature poetry, one can almost trace the course of English history and the developments of the national mind and soul in the treatment by successive poets of the scenes around them. Writing at the close of the age of Chivalry, Chaucer was simple and clear-cut in narratives. In his " Canterbury Tales " he describes the shower and sunshine of spring and the melody of birds with marvellous particularity noting specially that small birds sleep at night with open eye. It is only rarely that moderns can be so extrovert or simple. Not many in our days can sing of April and the change from sunshine to shower, as William Watson does:

April, April,
Laugh thy girlish laughter,
Then the moment after,
Weep thy girlish tears.

Spenser, heralding the great age of Elizabethan poetry, is full of splendid imagery but is essentially uncomplicated in conception.
He deals thus with Spring

Whilst it is Prime

Fresh Spring, the herald of loves mighty king,
In whose cote-armour richly are displayed
All sorts of flowers, the which on earth do spring
In goodly colours gloriously arrayed—
Soe to my love, where she is careless layd,
Yet in her winters bowre not well awake;

Tell her the joyous time will not be staid,
Unless she doe him by the forelock take;
Bid her therefore her selfe ready make,
To wayt on Love amongst his lovely crew;
Where everyone, that misseth then her make,
Shall be by him amearst with penance dew.
Make hast, therefore, sweet love, whilest it is prime;
For none can call againe the passed time.

or describing the Thames in Prothalmion :

EDMUND SPENSER

Prothalmion

Calme was the day, and through the trembling ayre
Sweet-breathing Zephyrus did softly play
A gentle spirit, that lightly did delay
Hot Titans beames, which then did glyster fayre;
When I, (whom sullein care),
Through discontent of my long fruitless stay
In Princes Court, and expectation vayne
Of idle hopes, which still doe fly away,
Like empty shaddowes, did afflict my brayne,
Walkt forth Walkt forth to ease my payne
Along the shore of silver streaming Themmes;
Whose rutty Banckle, the which his River hemmes,
Was paynted all with variable flowers,
And all the meades adornd with daintie gemmes
Fit to decke maydens bowers,
And crowne their Paramours
Against the Brydale day, which is not long:
Sweete Themmes! runne softly, till I end my Song.

Elsewhere in these lectures, I have referred to French poets like Lamartine and Victor Hugo who have composed wonderful descriptive verses. France has always been a pioneer in literary forms as well as in the expression of human moods, though its lyric poetry cannot be compared with that of England or India or even of Germany. The modern poetry of revolt of which the main representatives of England will be referred to later was pioneered by Charles Baudelaire. His language is incisive but also often involved and ornate. In his serial poems " Fleurs du Mal, " there are stanzas entitled " Eyes of Beauty " wherein speaking of the sunset sky, he expresses his prevalent attitude of defiance and bitterness, his theme being " I pursue a fading God in vain. "

But I pursue the fading god in vain,
For conquering Night makes firm her dark domain,
Mist and gloom fall, and terrors glide between.

This method was utilised in Matthew Arnold's "Scholar Gypsy," dealing with Oxford and Cumner Hills and Bagley Woods:

For most, I know, thou lov'st retired ground.
Thee, at the ferry, Oxford riders blithe,
Returning home on summer nights, have met
Crossing the stripling Thames at Bablock-hithe,
Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet,
As the slow punt swings round:
And leaning backwards in a pensive dream,
And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers
Pluck'd in shy fields and distant Wychwood bowers,
And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream:

* * * *

At some homestead in the Cumner hills,
Where at her open door the housewife darns,
Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a gate
To watch the threshers in the mossy barns.
Children, who early range these slopes and late
For cresses from the rills,
Have known thee watching, all an April day,
The springing pastures and the feeding kine;
And mark's thee, when the stars come out and shine
Through the long dewy grass move slow away
In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley Wood,
Where most the Gipsies by the turf-edged way
Pitch their smoked tents, and every bush you see
With scarlet patches tagg'd and shreds of gray,
Above the forest-ground call'd Thessaly—
The blackbird picking food
Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all;
So often has he known thee past him stray
Rapt, twirling in thy hand a wither's spray,
And waiting for the spark from Heaven to fall.

When we light upon Shakespeare, we discern not only the supreme pinnacles of Elizabethan sentiment full of pride for England's history and achievements and, truth to say, also somewhat contemptuous of other climes and manners but we also note with amazement how he transcended his environment and dis-

played a universal genius. He does not often concentrate on the description of natural scenes and landscape; but when he does so, he is unique in not only bringing before us a picture of the *mise en scene* but relating it to human thought and mood. In his Troilus and Cressida, Shakespeare utters the oft-quoted line "One touch of Nature makes the world kin." We may well substitute "Shakespeare" for "Nature" in this line. Even when Hamlet is making fun of the old pedant, Polonius, his description of the multiform aspects of a cloud is striking.

Hamlet: You see yonder cloud that is almost in shape of a camel.
Polonius: By the mass and 'tis like a camel indeed.
Hamlet: Methinks it is a weasal.
Polonius: It is backed like a weasal.
Hamlet: Or like a whale
Polonius: Very like a whale.
Hamlet: They fool me to the top of my bent.

In Hamlet, again, the following description of the colouration of the willow branch is marvellous in its knowledge of natural lore:

There is a willow grows aslant a brook.

That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream. The well-known evocation of a precipice in King Lear is, in its way, almost as wonderful as the picture in Kalidasa's Raghuvamsa of Rama and Seetha flying over the sea:

How fearful
And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air
Show scarce as gross as beetles
The murmuring surge
That on the unnumbered idle pebbles chafes
Cannot be heard so high.

Othello enlists Desdemona's interest by his account of "antres vast and deserts idle
Rough quarries, rocks and hills whose heads touch Heaven." On the other hand, in 'Love's Labours Lost,' we find an inimitable commingling of Spring's flowery attractions.

When daisies pied and violets blue
And lady smocks all silver white
And cuckoo birds of yellow hue
Do paint the meadows with delight.

When Macbeth describes the house of his host and wishes to prove that

the air is pure, he refers to the fastidious choice of the bird which he terms "The Temple Haunting Martlet":

Titania in the "Midsummer Night's Dream" chooses for her slumber a "bank where the wild thyme blows" and the lucious description of the site foreshadows some of Keat's lines a century later:

I know a bank wherein the wild thyme blows
Where orchids and the nodding violet grows
Quite o'er canopied with lucious woodbrim
With sweet muskroses and with eglantine.
There sleeps Titania sometimes of the night.

In the sonnets, Shakespeare sings

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore
So do our minutes hasten to their end.

The description of Spring and Winter may complete our extracts from the greatest of modern Western poets; but they will be sufficient to demonstrate Shakespeare's comprehensive faculties and his penetrating love of Nature.

Shakespeare almost deliberately sought to avoid introspective or metaphysics save by seeming accident. He chose familiar themes and sentiments and invested them with the magic of poetry.

Spring and Winter

(i)

When daisies pied and violets blue,
And lady-smocks all silver-white,
And cuckoo-birds of yellow hue,
Do paint the meadows with delight,
The cuckoo then, on every tree,
Mocks married men; for thus sings he, Cuckoo!
Cuckoo, cuckoo!—O word of fear,
Unpleasing to a married ear!
When shepherds pipe on oaten straws,
And merry larks are ploughmen's clocks,
When turtles tread, and rocks, and daws,
And maidens bleach their summer smocks
The cuckoo then, on every tree,
Mocks married men; for thus sings he, Cuckoo!
Cuckoo, cuckoo!—O word of fear,
Unpleasing to a married ear!

(ii)

When icicles hang by the wall,
And Dick, the shepherd blows his nail,

And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipp'd and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
To-whit!
To-who!—a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.
When all aloud the wind doth blow,
And coughing drownes the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marian's nose looks red and raw,
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
To-whit!
To-who!—a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When we turn to Milton, we shall find, as the following extracts will exemplify, that we encounter the work of a conscientious and erudite scholar who recites a beautiful catalogue of images which seem to be evoked from within rather than assimilated from without :

The ploughman near at hand
Whistles over furrowed land
And the milkmaid singeth blithe
And the mower his scythe
And every sheppard tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale
Medows trim with daisies pied
Shallow brooks and rivers wide
Turrets and battlements it sees.
Bosomed high in trees
The cynosure of neighbouring eyes.
Off at sea, north-east winds blow
Sabacan odours from the spicy shore
From Arabia the blast.

Nevertheless, already in Milton, Nature poetry had begun to wear the same mantle which later adorned the limbs of Wordsworth. How modern in its outlook appear the following lines in Lycidas dealing with his friend who was drowned in the Irish Sea :

Under the opening yelids of the Morn,
We drove a-field, and both together heard

What time the grey-fly winds her sultry horn,
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the star that rose at evening bright
Toward heaven's descent had sloped his westering wheel.
Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute;
Tempered to the oaten flute,
Rough Satyrs danced and Fauns with cloven heel
From the glad sound would not be absent long;
And old Damoetas loved to hear our song.
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies
The tufted crowtoe and pale jassamine
The white pink and the pansy freakt with jet
The glowing violet
The musk-rose and the well-attir'd woodbine
With cowships wan that hand the pensive head
And every flower that sad embroidery wears.

The same introspective contemplation is noticed in that original genius, Sir Thomas Browne who says in his " Religio Medici ":

All things are artificial for Nature is the art of God;
We carry within us the wonders we seek without us;
There is all Africa and her prodigies in us.

The description of Spring by the Earl of Surrey belongs to the same type of writing:

HENRY HOWARD, EARL OF SURREY
Description of Spring

Wherein each thing renews, save only the Lover
The soote season, that bud and bloom forth brings,
With green hath clad the hill and eke the vale:
The nightingale with feathers new she sings;
The turtle to her make hath told her tale.
Summer is come, for every spray now springs:
The hart hath hung his old head on the pale;
The buck in brake his winter coat he flings;
The fishes flete with new repaired scale.
The adder all her slough away she slings;
The swift swallow pursueth the flies smale;
The busy bee her honey now she mings;
Winter is worn that was the flowers' bale.
And thus I see among these pleasant things
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs.

There is an appreciation of Nature in these verses but not an immersing of the soul in Nature.

A century had to elapse before a minute as well as a sympathetic appreciation of Nature emerged and although he lived in the 18th century, Thomas Cray, the author of "Elegy written in a Country Churchyard" belongs to the modern dynasty of careful delineators of the country and its sights and scenes.

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day
The lowing herd winds slowly over the lea
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.
Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sigh
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save when the beetle wheels his droning flight
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds.
Save that from yonder ivy mantled tower
The moping owl does to the Moon complain.

In the above lines, almost every word has a special meaning and significance and one does not know what to admire most—the accuracy of the description or the conveying to our minds of the pervasive atmosphere of gentle melancholy. Blake who was intermediate between Gray and Burns, though an authentic seer, was not essentially a lover of Nature. The distinction between the old and the new in English poetry would be clearly understood by putting side by side this poem by Isaac Watts, namely,

Death, like a narrow sea, divides
That heavenly land from ours
So the Jews old Canaan stood
While Jordon rolled between
But timorous mortals start and shrink
To cross the narrow sea
And linger shivering on the brink
And fear the launch away
Could we but climb where Moses stood
And view the landscape.........
Not Jordon's stream, nor death's cold flood
Should fight us from the shore.

Let us contemplate the poetry that began with Burns and culminated in Wordsworth, Byron, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats. Contrast Watts with Burns who hails the Mountain Daisy as a wee modest crimson-tipped flower and who apostrophises the mouse disturbed by the plough :

Wee sleekit cow'ring timorous beastie
O, what a panic in thy breast.

Here we see the essential difference between the 19th and the previous centuries.

No account of landscape poetry will be complete without outlining the manysided characteristics of Wordsworth's genius. From everything that he saw, animate or inanimate, he derived inspiration.

" The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion, the tall rock
The mountain and the deep and gloomy wood
Their colours and their forms were then to me
An appetite, a feeling and a love
That had no need of a remoter charm
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye."
" And hark, how blithe the throstle sings
He too is no mean preacher
Come forth into the light of things
Let nature be your teacher."

On another occasion, Wordsworth asserts:

Two voices are there, one is of the sea
One of the mountains, each a mighty voice.

Some have declared that, in truth, landscape is a matter of illusions. But, to say so, is to forget that confronted with certain scenes, one's feelings are a reality and one's reactions to colour, mass, detail and perspective change with different nervous susceptibilities. The transference of our feelings to the natural world is as inevitable as the impinging of the natural world on our bodily frame and our emotions. When we speak of the laughing tides or the laughter of blue water of a lake that sleeps in smiles, we envisage a reflection of our moods as well as a creation of moods from outside sources. This is so even when, as in the case of some poets, a feeling of despair forces an abjuration as when Lacordaire bids adieu to the oceans, rivers and mountains in a mood of despair:

Jaidit adien a'l'ocean
Aux fleuves et aux montagnes

Blake, during one of his visions of sorrow or mystic musing, said that he hated and avoided Nature as weakening and deadening. Such a mood is perhaps what the Sanskrit poets term " Pranayakalaha " the quarrel of intimates passing from the extreme of adoration to that of hatred. But generally speaking, to most of us, landscape offers refreshment, pleasure, stimulus and inspiration. Especially is the effect most marked in the case of the two immensities, the oceans of air and of water. It is only a few who, like Victor Hugo, loved and

sang powerfully about the ocean (La mer) and yet asserted that he preferred to it his dear city of Paris (la ville lumiere).

Essential differences of poetic temperament account for the attitude of some who consider that the sea is too tremendous a manifestation of natural forces to come home to their minds and hearts and who, like Horace, prefer the Bandusian springs to the ship-wrecking ocean (mare naufragum). Generally, however, English poetry has been full of love for the fierce and untamed ocean. Here are some examples :

A wet sheet and a flowering sea
A wind that follows fast
The world of waters is our home
And merry men are we.
He rose with dawn and fired with hope
Shot o'er the seething harbour bar
And reach'd the ship and caught the rope
And whistled to the morning star
The exulting music—the pulses' maddening play
That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way.
" The sea, the sea, the open sea
The blue, the fresh, the ever free."

The sea as being completely outside human history of whose lives it bears no traces, has been the object of passionate devotion although William Morris has been able to say :

O, bitter sea, O, tumultous sea,
Full many an ill is wrought by thee.

Swinburne is the one poet who is most in love with the fierce and even frightening aspects of the ocean and he places before us pictures of the curling over of breakers before their toppling plunge in the poem beginning

From the shore that hath no shore beyond it set in all the sea.

It is not alone in the description of the fierce and magnificent aspects of Nature that modern poets excel but in pictures presented to us, for instance, of the faint crescent Moon over the sea as pictured by Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

The Sun was gone now ; the curl'd moon
Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf.

Another memorable poem by Rossetti is entitled " Wood Spurge " in which the poet, in deep grief, looks at a little weed in flower and derives consolation from its perfect and unexpected beauty :

My eyes wide open, had the run
Of some ten weeds to fix upon
Among those few out of the Sun
The woodspurge flower'd, three cups in one
From perfect grief there need not be
Wisdom or even memory
One thing learnt remains to me
The woodspurge has a cup of three.

With the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, we approach a distinctively new epoch. Robert Bridges was a sort of hark-back and his descriptions of the "Downs", his "April Scene on Land and Sea" and his "Apostrophie to the Nightingale" are the after-glow of the light that illuminated Keats and Shelley.

W. B. Yeats in poems like Sailing to Byzantium is also reminiscent of the past.

The salmon falls, the mackerel crowded seas
Fish, flesh or fowl command all summer long
Whatever is begotten, born and dies
Caught in the sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unageing intellect.

The impact of disillusionment and the curious mixture of despair and courage arising therefrom have characterised recent poetry both in England and on the Continent and this outlook was first seen in the poetry of Thomes Hardy, who, in addition to his Wessex novels, created poetry of great distinction,

Only a man harrowing clods
In a slow silent walk
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
Half asleep as they stalk.
Only there smoke without flames
From the heaps of couch-grass.
Yet this will go onward the same
Though dynasties pass.
Yonder a maid and her wight
Come whispering by.
War's annals will cloud into night
Ere their story die.

In the same strain but with an under-current of doubting hope are these other lines from Hardy writing of a frosty winter twilight when a thrush was warbling his joyful notes :

An aged thrush frail, gaunt and small
In blast-beruffled plume
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.
So little cause for carollings
Of such ecstatic mood
Was written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around
That I could think there trampled through
His happy good-night air
Some blessed hope whereof he knew
And I was unaware.

What a contrast do these lines present to Swinburne's "Song of Spring" in his "Atalanta In Colydon".

When the hounds of Spring are on the Winter's traces
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain,
The full streams feed on flower or rushes
Ripi grasses travelling foot
The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes
From leaf to flower and flower to fruit
And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire
And the Oat is heard above the lyre.

Hardy and Swinburne are as poles apart—the one joyous and fluent and spontaneous, even when apparently artificial—the other restrained and inherently pessimistic. Yet both represented different aspects of the same epoch. Every mood from light to grave is recorded in his verses by George Meredith who, like Hardy, was in addition a remarkable novelist of manners. He was one of the most successful delineators of natural scenery amongst modern poets and his powers of observation and of picturing the reactions of Nature on human life and mood are abundantly displayed in his poems. The Squirrel among the Pine-tops, The Owl breathing his silent way at Dusk and the Skylark singing in Twilight, are characteristic specimens of his nature poems.

Shy as the squirrel that leaps among the pine-tops
Wayward as the swallow overhead at set of Sun
She whom I love is hard to catch and conquer
Hard, but O, the glory of winning were she won.
Lovely are the curves of the white owl sweeping
Wavy in the dusk lit by one large star

Lone on the fir branch, his rattle note unvaried
Brooding o'er the gloom spins the brown evejar.
Darker grows the valley more and more forgetting
Mother of the dews. dark-lash'd twilight
Low-lidded twilight o'er the valley's brim
Bounding on thy breast sings the dew-delighted skylark
Clear as though the dew-drops had their voice in him.

He is a master of imagery. He describes thus a sharp wind passing over the waves:

Mark where the pressing wind shoots Javelin like
Its skeleton shadow on the broad-backed wave'
Here is a picture of Plunging Waves :
Here where the ponderous breakers plunge and strike
And dart their hissing tongues high up the sand.

No lover of poetry and no student of psychology can help being poignantly impressed by lines like the following from his "Modern Love" which constitute a climax of poetic imagery and psychological suggestion,

Ah! what a dusty answer gets the soul
When hot for certainties on this our life
In tragic hints here see what evermore
Moves dark as yonder midnight ocean's force
Thundering like ramping hosts of warrior horse
To throw that faint thin line upon the shore.

As a result of disillusionment and frustration, just before and after the two World Wars, the poetic mood of Europe underwent a transformation. Before this period, poetry may have been light hearted or serious, philosophical or subjectively descriptive. It may have been poignantly sardonic or indignant as in Dryden's and Pope's satires, but there was not much evidence of utter disbelief in human values and no refusal to accept optimistic solutions of life's problems. Lines like these of a modern poet inveighing against the Powers of the Universe and demanding of the Supreme only one boon

"Grant thou the courage of unbelief" are symptomatic of recent crises and the resultant currents of thought.

Let us contemplate the poem by Lovelace entitled "Grasshopper", full of the joy of life and untroubled by after-thought and compare it with the work, not of one who cannot be classed with the professed pessimists and despairers. Walter De La Mare who is able to evoke striking pictures of landscape and seascape. "The Grasshopper" by Lovelace

O Thou that swing'st upon the waving hair
Of some well-filled oaten beard,

Drunk every night with a delicious tear
    Dropt thee from heaven, where thou wert rear'd :
The joys of earth and air are thine entire,
    That with thy feet and wings dost hop and fly ;
And when the poppy works, thou dost retire
  To thy carved acorn-bed to lie.
Up with the day, the Sun that welcom'st then,
  Sport'st in the gilt plaits of his beams,
And all these merry days mak'st merry men,
  Thyself, and melancholy streams.

" Sunk Lyonesse " by Walter De La Mare

In sea-cold Lyonesse,
When the Sabbath eve shafts down
On the roofs, walls, belfries
Of the foundered town,
The Nereids pluck their lyrs
Where the greem translucency beats,
And with motionless eyes at gaze
Make minstrelsy in the streets.
And the oean water stirs
In salt-worn casemate and porch
Plies the blunt-snonted fish
With fire in his skull for torch.
And the ringing wires resound ;
And the unearthly lovely weep,
In lament of the music they make
In the sullen courts of sleep:
Whose marble flowers bloom for aye :
And—lapped by the moon-guiled tide—
Mock their carver with heart of stone,
Caged in his stone-ribbed side.

Words are not necessary to indicate the complete change of attitude.

W. B. Yeats, in his poem " Sailing to Byrantium, " exemplifies the same process.

Those dying generations—at their song,
The salmon-falls, the mackeral-crowded seas,
Fish, flesh or fowl, commend all summer long
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.
Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unageing intellect.

So also does W. H. Auden in his lines "Something is bound to Happen ":

Doom is dark and deeper than any sea-dingle
Upon what man it fell
In Spring, day, withering flowers appearing
Avalanches sliding, white snow from rockface
That he should leave his house
No cloud soft hand can hold him, restraint by women
But ever that man goes.

The difference of treatment originating in a change of social or personal atmosphere may be encountered in Persian poetry. Compare, for instance, Jami or the Rose Carden of Sadi with Omar Khayyam as translated by Fitzgerald, with rare fidelity to the spirit of the original. I am citing six verses from Omar Khayyam in which, although the metaphors and simiies taken from Nature are conventional, nevertheless. the interpretation of Nature's manifestations and of their relations to man's moods and destiny bring before our mind's eyes what the Latin poet described as *lacbrymae rerum* " the tearfulness of things".

From Omar Khayyam

Look to the blowing Rose about us—'Lo,
Laughing, ' she says, 'into the world I blow,
At once the silken tassel of my Purse
Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw'.
They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts were Jamshyd gloried and drank deep ;
And Bahram, that great Hunter—the wild Ass
Stamps o'er his Head, but cannot break his Sleep.
I sometimes think that never blows so red
The Rose as where some buried Caesar bled ;
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears
Dropt in her Lap from some one's lovely Head.
And this reviving Herb whose tender Green
Flegges the River-Lip on which we lean—
Ah, lean upon it lightly for who knows
From what one's lovely Lip it springs unseen !
And we, that now make merry in the Room
They left. and Summer dresses in new bloom,
Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth
Descend—ourselves to make a Couch-for whom ?
Yon rising Moon that looks for us again—
How oft hereafter will she wax and wane ;

How oft hereafter rising look for us
Through this same Garden—and for *one* in vain !

The difference between Sadi and Omar Khayyam is the difference between Chaucer whose " Birk and the Broom Blossom Bonnie " and Wordsworth in his " Intimations of Immortality ". Similar also is the contrast, for instance, between the stark, bare, description of the various levels of Hell in Dante's "Inferno" and the completely introspective and compelling evocations in Shelley's Adonais or Hellas or Cenci.

The fluttering twigs of the light ash tree and its leaves and what is termed the soft eye music of its slow waving boughs furnish another wonderful image of haunting beauty. Wordsworth's taste for walking, skating and boating led to an intimacy with nature which he found to be a refuge from the insincere conventions of society and the futilities of politics. It was to his glory that he loved both the humble and the sublime whereas Byron was moved only by the sublime and others like George Elliot loved the humble. The union of extremes is illustrated in the following two verses:

Beneath stern mountains many a spot lies
And lofty springs give birth to lowly streams
Between two sister moorland rills.
There seems a spot that seems to lie
Sacred to flowers of the hills
And sacred to the sky.

In what is perhaps one of his flawless master-pieces, the poem commencing "The World is too much with us," he not only describes the sea and the winds and exclaims ' little we see in Nature that is ours, ' but develops a pantheistic philosophy which he shares with Shelley and with some recent poets:

The world is too much with us, late and soon
Getting and spending we lay waste our powers
Little we see in Nature that is ours.
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon.
The sea that bears her bosom to the morn
The winds that will be howling at all hours
And are upgathered now like sleeping flowers
For this, for everything we are out of tune
It moves us not. Great God ! I'd rather be.
A Pagan sucked in a creed outworn
So might I standing on their pleasant sea.
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn
Have sight of Protens rising from the sea
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

His eyes neglects no peculiarities of natural appearance. All of us have seen the phenomenon which he describes in the following lines but it does not come to us as it does to him.

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bold top of an eminence.

The sight of a violet by a stone, a group of golden daffodils, an hour of splendor in the grass, evoke images in him which he translates into perfect verse:

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye
Fair as a star when only one
Is shining in the sky.

The convolution of a smooth-lipped shell or a brotherhood of venerable trees all appeal alike to him, In his own words,

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man
Of moral evil and of good
Than all the sages can.

He is indignantly scornful of persons to whom Nature does not appeal. In his Peter Bell, he exclaims

A primrose by the river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him
And it was nothing more.

Byron's temperament and outlook were perhaps the exact opposite of Wordsworth's. Wordsworth was open to Nature's impulses and let himself be schooled by her. Byron never forgot himself and his own self torturing personality. The passages I have already cited as well as the following verse in 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage' will demonstrate the contrast.

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods
There is a rapture on the lonely shore
There is society where none intrudes
By the deep sea and music in its roar
I iove not man the less but Nature more
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe and feel
What I can never express yet cannot all conceal.

Small, though his total poetic contribution has been, Coleridge has been truly inspirational, whether he indicates a description of natural scenery or deals with the mental torments of the Ancient Mariner, after his act of cruelty.

" Oh lady we receive but what we give
And in our life alone does Nature live "

Ah ! from the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
Enveloping the earth. (Ode to dejection).

The description of Xanadu is one of the most strongly suggestive in all literature and it furnishes, in addition one of the most apt assimilations of the sound of words which the scene described,

In Xanadu did Kublai Khan
A stately pleasure dome decree........
Where Alph the sacred river ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to the Sunless sea.

* * * * *

And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran
Then reached the caverns measureless to mar
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying War.

We turn to Keats and marvel at his Sonnets and Odes which are studded with evocative cameos embodied in words.

" Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night
And watching with eternal lids apart
Like Nature's patient, sleepless Eramite
The moving waters at their predestined task
Of pure ablution round Earth's human shores."
But here, there is no light
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways
I cannot see what flowers are at my feet
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs...
Fast fading violets covered up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.
(Ode to A Nightenigale.)

" Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness !
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun ;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-caves run :

To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core:
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel's shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For summer has o'er-brimm'd their calmmy cells.
Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind,
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed witht he fume of puppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers;
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozing hours by hours."

Keats embodies the very soul of poetry and his landscapes are suffused with what Wordsworth termed " the light that never was on sea or land".

All through his work, the love of abstract and objective beauty possessed on earth. Keat's soul and, as he has himself stated. he truly believed that " Beauty is truth, truth is beauty. This is all ye know and all need to know". Sir Henry Maine, once stated: " Except the blind forces of Nature there is nothing that moves in this world which is not Greek in origin". One-sided as this appreciation is, it may be said of Keats that there is nothing in his art, which is not Greek in conception.

Shelley hardly belongs to the Earth and seems to be part of the Empyrean and one with Nature. See his Cloud and his Demon of the World.

I bring fresh flowers for the thirsting flowers
From the seas and the streams.
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noon-day dreams.
....
And whiten the green plains under
And then again I dissolve it in rain
And laugh as I pass in thunder.
I am the daughter of the earth and water
And the nursling of the sky
I pass through the pores of the ocean and stars
I change but I cannot die.

In the Epipsychidion is contained a magnificent picture of the mingling of the earth " and the ocean ". Whether he apostrophises the West wind or a river as in the " Revolt of Islam, " he appears as a veritable spirit fluttering between the earth and the sky. Some of his verses are absolutely unapproachable. In ' Hellas ' occur the following lines:

The earth doth like a snake renew
Her winter weeds outworn.

In his lines describing the ruined statue of Ozymandias, he describes " the lone level sands that stretch far away ". In the " Revolt of Islam ", he refers to a great painter " who dips his pencil in the gloom of earthquake and eclipse ". Here are some memorable verses.

"Day and night, aloof from the high tower
And terraces, the earth and ocean seen
To sleep in one another's arms and dream
Of waves, flowers, clouds, woods, rocks and all that we
Read in their smiles and call reality."
" The world's great age begins anew
The golden years return
The earth doth like a snake renew
Her winter weeds outworn."
"Oh, wild west wind
Than breath of autumn west wind
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know
Thy voice and suddenly grow gray with fear
And tremble and despoil themselves."

And here is an unforgettable picture of desolate vestiges of old grandeur:—

" Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings,
Look on my works, ye mighty and despair
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away."
And the rose like a nymph to the bath addressed
Which unveiled the depth of her glowing breast.
And nearer to the river's trembling edge
There grow broad fiag-flowers, purple pranked with white
And starry river breds among the sedge
And floating water-lilies broad and bright

With here like that when some great painter dips
His pencil in the gloom of earthquake and eclipse.

His lines to a Skylark evince a complete union of word and sound and image.

Hail to thee, blithe spirit'
    Bird thou never wert—
That from heaven or near it
    Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.
Higher still and higher
    From the earth thou springest,
Like a cloud of fire ;
    The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring even singest.

Like a glow-worm golden
    In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
    Its aerial hue
Among the flowers and grass which screen it from the view
Like a rose embower'd
    In its own green leaves,
    By warm winds deflowered,
    Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavywinged thieves:
Sound of vernal showers
    On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awaken'd flowers—
    All that ever was
Joyous and clear and fresh-thy music doth surpass.

Here is the Ode to the West Wind :—

O Wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being
Thou from whose unseen presence—the leaves dead
Are driven like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,
Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multltudes ! O thou
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed
The winged seeds where they lie cold and low,

Between Shelley and Tennyson there was a poetical twilight in England and Tennyson marks the advent of the Scientific evolutionary spirit wedded to

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poetry. He shares with Wordsworth the gift of the jewelled phrase in describing Nature. See, for instance, in his "Maud" the description of the dreadful hollow behind the little wood, or that line in "In Memoriam",

Laburnums dropping-wells of fire.

He is also capable of rousing lines like those in his "Sailor Boy".

And often his work, though not continuously and of set purpose like Wordsworth, there occur marvellous delineations of natural scenes.

Browning, a contemporary of Tennyson, was a robust optimist though he occupied himself with enigmas and problems of the mediaeval ages and of the present; but he too was a keen observer.

"Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there
And whoever walks in England
Sees, some morning unaware
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm tree boles are in tiny leaf
While the chaffinels sings on the orchard bough
In England, now."
The year's at the Spring
And day's at the morn
Mornings' at seven
The hill sides few pearled.
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
Gods' in His heaven-
Alls' right with the world!

Rudyard Kipling whether he describes the "Steam Engine" or "The Road to Mandalay" is painfully preoccupied with the glory and the mission of his dearly loved England and with the Whiteman's burden. Much of his poetry sounds like a war-drum; but now and again, he achieves a rare loveliness.

There is a whisper down the field where the year has shot her yield
And the ricks stand gray in the sun
Singing—over there, come over for the bee has quit the clove
And your English summer's done.

Rossetti, whom I have already cited, was a painter poet and he had that vivid sense of colour and perspective which was derived from the sister art.

We pass from the days of Rossetti and Matthew Arnold and Swinburne and Meredith to the last few years during which but for lonely voices like those

of Watson in his poem on April and his Ode in May—a splendid piece of evocative rhetoric—or those of Meredith and Hardy who contributed in their distinctive ways, to the treasury of English verse of England, there was little of Nature-poetry that was remarkable or distinctive until we come to our own times.

Almost the peer of Wordsworth in the fusing of landscape and human feeling was the French La Martine:

Que le ventqui gemit, le roseau qui soupire Ventqui
Que les parfums, lagers dont l'air est caresse
Que tout ce qu'on enterd l'on voit on l'on respire
Tout dise ; Ils ont passe

Here the melancholy aspects of evanescent nature are markedly depicted.

The two World Wars and tbe emergence of unprecedented threats to civilisation consequent on atomic developments have produced a complete transformation in men's moods and outlook. Revolutionary modes of thought have been creating a growing disbelief in religious and social values. An almost fierce pessimism born of the disillusionments undergone during their terrific and bestial experiences both by fighting men and civilians have left their impact on the souls of the recent poets. Let us look at W. H. Audden's " Something is Bound to Happen "

Doom is dark and deeper than any sea-dingle
Upon what man it fall
In Spring day, writhing flowers appearing
Avalanches sliding, white snow from rockface
That he should leave his house
No cloud soft hand can hold him,
Restraint by women.

or perceive at the intentional and perverse obscurity of E. E. Cummings:

What is much of a which of a wind
Give the truth to summer's lie
Bloddies with dizzying leaves the Sun
And yanks immortal stars awry.

Rupert Brooke's Address to the Clouds makes us realise how deep the iron of the years of destiny has penetrated into the living soul leaving it without vision and without hope.

Down the blue night the unending columns press
In noiseless tumult, break and wave and flow
Now tread the far South or lift rounds of snow
Up to the white Moon's hidden loveliness.
Some pause in their grave wanderings comradeless
And turn wlth profound gesture vague and slow
As who would pray good for the world but know
Their benediction empty as they bless.

Almost Exceptionally Lord Alfred Douglas, has, managed to escape from these obsessions and to be objectively descriptive, (Impression de Nuit) :

See what a mass of gems the city wears
Upon her broad live bosom, row on row
Rubies and emeralds and amethysts glow
See that huge circle, like a necklace stares
With thousands of bold eyes to heavens and dares
The golden stars to dim the lamps below
And in ihe mirror of the Mire I know
The Moon has left her image unawares.

A. E (as G. W. Russell called himself) was another isolated phenomenon and wrote verses which present contrasts to the prevalent tendency and wherein mysticism and descriptive excellence are combined.

When the breath of twilight blows to flame the mistry skies
All its vaporous sapphire. violet glow and silver gleam
With their magic flood me through the gateway of the eyes
I am one with the twilight dream
By the margin of the great deep.

In what must appear to be a breathless summary of an immense variety of poetic endeavour and achievement, I have sought to convey the impressions which several poets in various countries and epochs have made on me. In tenth, these are personal reactions and I have not attempted detailed analysis or critical appraisement. Any literary estimate is bound to be intrinsically subjective, and as a Sanskrit poet says : लोको भिन्न रुचि: means tastes differ vastly. The same lines in a poem or the same paragraphs in an essay or history will speak in different languages to different readers and even to the same person different notes will be sounded on separate occasions. The utmost that I can claim is to have furnished a uumber of examples which, whether my remarks or observations are assented to or dissented from, will present a series of vignettes, showing as vignettes do, the head and the shoulders with the background shaded down. I shall be satisfied if I have designated some of the guides that take us beyond the threshold of the Palace of Nature. One of Nature's truest lovers, Wordsworth, has reminded us that

" The World is too much with us ; late or soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers,
Little we see in Nature that is ours."

And even if we see, we are not always capable of understanding the significance of what is revealed to us. The Poet's prerogative is to help us to see aright, and to understand and solve the riddles and comprehend the ever-unfolding Revelations of the Universe without us and within.

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